

Message Text

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62

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-03

CU-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 STR-04 /076 W

----- 098125

R 090237Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5334

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HONG KONG 6354

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, ETRD, CH, HK

SUBJ: GROWING CONTAINER LINK BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CANTON

1. SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH TWO HONG KONG SHIPPING OFFICIALS HAVE REVEALED THE EXISTENCE OF A GROWING CONTAINER-TRADE LINK BETWEEN THE PRC AND HONG KONG. ONE OFFICIAL, WITH THE MODERN TERMINALS LTD. CONTAINER TERMINAL AT KUAI CHUNG, STATED THAT THE FACILITY WAS CONTAINERIZING ABOUT 12,000 TONS OF PRC GOODS A MONTH AT THE END OF 1974. THIS TOTAL, UP FROM ABOUT 500 TONS IN JANUARY 1974 AND 5,000 TONS IN JUNE 1974, IS STILL GROWING.

2. AN EAST ASIATIC COMPANY OFFICIAL SAID EAC SHIPPED ABOUT 75,000 TONS OF PRC CONTAINER CARGO OUT OF HONG KONG IN 1974 AND THE MONTHLY RATE IS HIGHER IN 1975. BOTH OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE CARGO ARRIVES IN BREAK BULK FORM BY LIGHTER PRIMARILY FROM CANTON, BUT ALSO FROM OTHER PRC COASTAL PORTS.

3. ONE OF THE SHIPPING OFFICERS RELATED THAT KWANGTUNG

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OFFICIALS TOLD THE HONG KONG MANAGERS OF THE CANTON-HONG

KONG RAILROAD THAT THE PRC ESTIMATED ITS USE OF THE RAILROAD WOULD INCREASE BY SEVEN TIMES IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND ASKED WHAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO DO TO IMPROVE FREIGHT CAPACITY. THE SHIPPING OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT RAIL LIMITATIONS WILL LEAD TO INCREASING DEPENDENCE ON WATER TRANSPORT BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CANTON WITH CONTAINER TRAFFIC PLAYING A PROGRESSIVELY LARGER ROLE.

4. PRC OFFICIALS, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SHIPPING EXECUTIVES, HAVE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY BASICALLY REGARD HONG KONG AS SIMPLY ANOTHER PRC PORT. BOTH HONG KONG OFFICIALS EXPRESSED THEIR CONVICTION THAT, CONTRARY TO SOME PRESS REPORTS, THE PRC HAS LITTLE INTEREST AT PRESENT IN CONSTRUCTING A FULL-SCALE CONTAINER TERMINAL AT CANTON, AND IS FULLY PREPARED TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND THE USE OF THE ALREADY EXISTING, VERY MODERN CONTAINER FACILITIES IN HONG KONG. THIS WOULD NOT PRECLUDE, HOWEVER, CONSTRUCTION OF A MORE LIMITED CONTAINER FACILITY AS PART OF CANTON'S CURRENT PROGRAM TO UPGRADE ITS PORT CAPABILITY.
CROSS

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